

To: Appropriations Committee
Re: Budget hearing February 10, 2016

I am contacting you to urge you to carefully consider any further reduction in the budget for the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. The scientists at the Station perform many very important functions for the citizens of the state of Connecticut, many of which are legislatively mandated. I know that the director of the Station has dutifully managed the finances of the agency as he has had to deal with the earlier budget cuts last year. Simply put, any further cuts to this vital agency will seriously impact people throughout the state. For one example, Connecticut is very fortunate to have the virus testing abilities at the New Haven lab. With news of the Zika virus now confirmed in Pennsylvania, it is critical to have this testing equipment and the scientists who operate it ready to assist our Public Health Department should the virus spread further north. In addition, the Station is at the forefront of testing for other mosquito and tick vectored viruses, and the plant pathology and entomology departments are critical for the agricultural community in our great state. I own a retail nursery and greenhouse business, and I can tell you that the research that Station scientists perform does so much to assist growers and farmers in Connecticut. For example, their research guides producers in ways to use less pesticides, protecting the environment and specifically protecting pollinators and protecting ground water. The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station is at a bare-bones budget as it is. Please don't reduce the effectiveness of this important agency by cutting the Station's budget further.

Thank you,
Paul Larson, Owner
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